

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1184

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AMGT

SUBJ: REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL AMERICAN POSITION

REF: LIBREVILLE 1084, LIBREVILLE 875

1. WE HAVE RECENTLY HAD OCCASION DURING GORM SUBMISSIONS (REFTELS) TO STATE MY CONVICTION THAT THIS EMBASSY SORELY NEEDS AN AMERICAN GSO. OUR RECENT APPEAL FOR TDY ASSISTANCE TO AF/EX (LIBREVILLE 1450 AND STATE 145994) POINTED UP OUR NEED FOR IMMEDIATE HELP BUT IS ONLY SYMPTOMATIC OF OUR NEED FOR PERMANENT ASSISTANCE. PURPOSE OF THIS TELEGRAM IS FORMAL REQUEST FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF GSO POSITION IN LIBREVILLE TO BE FILLED ASAP. IN MAKING REQUEST, WE FULLY COGNIZANT OF POLICY TO DECREASE RATHER THAN INCREASE USG PRESENCE OVERSEAS, BUT I AM CONVINCED THAT DESPITE BEST EFFORTS, OUR ADMIN OFFICER, GIVEN QUALITY OF OUR FSLs, IS GOING TO FALL FURTHER AND FURTHER BEHIND IN COURSE OF NORMAL EMBASSY BUSINESS, AND EVEN MORE SO AS MAJOR PROJECTS SUCH AS CONSTRUCTION OF STAFF HOUSING BEGIN TO MATURE.

2. AT PRESENT TIME, LONE AMERICAN IN ADMIN SECTION (EXCEPTING C&R) SUPERVISES 19 FSLs AND OVERSEES AN ADDITIONAL 17 CONTRACT EMPLOYEES. AS DEPT IS AWARE, EXCEPT FOR TCNS, QUALITY IS NOT GOOD AND COMPETENT LOCAL PERSONNEL ARE VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE

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TO FIND. EVEN AMONG TCNS, AND PARTICULARLY IN GENERAL SERVICES, QUALITY IS UNEVEN. ADMIN OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE MAINTENANCE OF 15 LEASED AND 4 USG-OWNED PROPERTIES, 8 VEHICLES, DIRECT SUPERVISION OF B&F, CASHIER, MEDICAL, PERSONNEL, COMMO, AND SECURITY FUNCTIONS, (INCLUDING MSGS), AND GENERAL SERVICES (INCLUDING MOTOR POOL, PROPERTY MANAGEMENT, LIAISON WITH GOG AUTHORITIES, SHIPPING AND RECEIVING,

PROCUREMENT AND DISPOSAL OF EXPENDABLES AND NON-EXPENDABLES). GRANTED THIS IS SMALL POST, BUT QUALIFY OF LOCAL WORKMANSHIP IS LOW, A MACHINE REPAIRED TODAY WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY HAVE TO BE REPAIRED AGAIN IN NEAR FUTURE, ALMOST EVERYTHING IS IMPORTED, AND SPARE PARTS ARE NOT TO BE FOUND. AS RESULT, SUPERVISORY FUNCTION IS OVER-TAXED, ADMIN OFFICER IS SPREAD TOO THIN, AND LIKE ALICE MUST TRY AND RUN AS HARD AS SHE CAN JUST TO STAY IN PLACE. DAY TO DAY PROJECTS MUST PERFORCE BE ATTENDED TO, LEAVING PRECIOUS LITTLE TIME TO DEVOTE TO MORE TIME-CONSUMING PROJECTS SUCH AS MAINTENANCE OF PROPERTY INVENTORIES. BURDEN HAS BEEN (AND WILL BE) INCREASED BY CREATION OF TWO NEW AMERICAN POSITIONS DURING PAST 12 MONTHS AND IMPENDING CREATION OF SECOND ICA POSITION.

3. FUTURE LOOKS LESS THAN PROMISING. I CAN SEE NO DIMINUTION OF ADMIN RESPONSIBILITIES. ON CONTRARY, THERE IS EVERY CHANCE OF SLOW DETERIORATION IN OUR ADMINISTRATIVE POSITION AS CUMULATIVE EFFECT OF LESS THAN HIGH GRADE WORK OF FSLs CONTINUES TO MOUNT. TCNS IN OUR JUDGMENT ARE NOT THE ANSWER. NOT ONLY IS THEIR TENURE UNCERTAIN, BUT ESPECIALLY IN GENERAL SERVICES, THEY DO NOT AND CANNOT HAVE SAME SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY AND DEDICATION THAT WE CAN EXPECT FROM AN AMERICAN, NOR, FRANKLY, ARE THEY GOOD AT MANAGING OTHER FSLs.

4. I CANNOT QUANTIFY IN FINANCIAL TERMS GAIN OR LOSS TO USG LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AND THIS POST OF HAVING AN AMERICAN GSO, BUT I AM STRONGLY PERSUADED THAT EVENTUAL SAVINGS AND MAINTENANCE AND CONTRACT COSTS AND IN WEAR AND TEAR ON NERVES, AND GENERAL EFFICIENCY OF ADMIN OFFICER, PLUS OVERALL IMPROVEMENT IN OUR GENERAL ADMIN POSITION, WILL MUCH MORE THAN OUTWEIGHT COSTS OF MAINTAINING ONE MORE AMERICAN HERE.

5. FOR ALL THESE REASONS, I ASK THAT DEPT GIVE FAVORABLE CONSIDERATION TO CREATION OF NEW GSO POSITION NOW. WHAT IS NEEDED IS "CAN-DO" OFFICER NOT ONLY QUALIFIED IN AS MANY MAINTENANCE AREAS AS POSSIBLE, BUT READY TO GET HIS OR HER HANDS DIRTY. SUCH AN OFFICER SHOULD AT SAME TIME BE READY TO ASSIST ADMIN OFFICER IN VITAL SUPERVISORY FUNCTION, SO THAT SHE MAY DEVOTE MUCH MORE TIME TO OVERALL SUPERVISION, RECORD KEEPING, PERSONNEL MATTERS, BUDGET AND FISCAL AND SECURITY FUNCTIONS, NONE OF WHICH IN MY JUDGMENT NOW RECEIVE THE KIND SUPERVISION THEY SHOULD HAVE. ONLY POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE I CAN SEE SHOULD IT BECOME NECESSARY IS TO ASSIGN ADMIN FUNCTIONS TO OUR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OFFICER GENERAL (POSNO 10-107) WHO WAS NOT SENT HERE FOR THAT PURPOSE AND WHOSE CHANGE OF FUNCTIONS WOULD SERIOUSLY WEAKEN OUR ECONOMIC AND CONSULAR OPERATIONS.

6. DECONTROL UPON RECEIPT.TIENKEN

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